



Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness

By Rashid Khalidi

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Khalidi critically assesses the narratives that make up Palestinian history and identity and examines the ways in which the Palestinian national consciousness has come full circle.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Noted Palestinian historian Khalidi presents the most credible argument to date in English for the existence of an amorphous Palestinian territory with an identifiable population existing before the emergence of political Zionism. The author's primary purpose is to establish the origins of a Palestinian national consciousness, which he does superbly, even with the obvious animus toward Israel and Zionism. Khalidi's research was greatly enhanced by his access to the family library in Jerusalem, bringing to light certain documentation for the first time. His historiographic method is path-breaking, including coverage of nonelite elements of Palestinian society involved in the development of a nationalistic sentiment. Essential reading along with Muhammad Muslih's *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (Columbia Univ., 1990), this is highly recommended for specialists and general readers alike. Sanford R. Silverburg, Catawba Coll., Salisbury, N.C.

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From Kirkus Reviews

An impressively thoughtful, layered, and well documented study of key aspects of the evolution of modern Palestinian nationalism. Those expecting either a comprehensive history of the modern Palestinian movement or a polemic against Zionism and Israel should look elsewhere. Khalidi, who teaches history and directs the Center for International Studies at the University of Chicago, and who was a member of the Palestinian delegation to the Mideast peace negotiations, focuses almost entirely on the late Ottoman and early Mandate period (1880s through 1920s). He sees Palestinian nationalism emerging far earlier than is generally thought--in the preWW I period, when absentee landlords in Beirut and elsewhere sold large tracts of Palestinian land to the Jewish Colonization Association. Yet while modern Palestinian history is inextricably intertwined with that of Zionism, Khalidi focuses as much on other constituents of modern Palestinian identity, which include "patriotic feelings, local loyalties, Arabism, religious sentiments, [and] higher levels of education and literacy." He demonstrates how the long-term influence of modernization, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and concomitant European incursion in the preWW I era, followed by the betrayal of promises made by both the British and French, contributed as much to Palestinian nationalism as the 1917 Balfour Declaration and Zionist immigration. The only flaw here is that Khalidi races through the last 70 years of the development of Palestinian identity. Even here, however, he offers a fascinating analysis of why Palestinian nationalism seemingly became "submerged" after the first Arab- Israeli War (1947-49) and until the PLO's founding in 1964. At a time when the end of the hundred years' war between Zionism/Israel and the Palestinians appears on the horizon, this illuminating study will help readers gain a sophisticated understanding of how the Palestinians came to be who they are. -- *Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

[Khalidi's] historiographic method is pathbreaking.

(Library Journal)

A major contribution to historical Palestinian nationalism.

(Foreign Affairs)

An impressive, thoughtful, layered, and well-documented study of key aspects of the evolution of modern Palestinian nationalism.

(Kirkus Reviews)

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